

NORTH PLAINFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Newsletter



Details from the King mural, District of Columbia Public Library - An Easy Classroom Resource

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library in Washington, D.C., houses a significant mural honoring Dr. King's legacy. Commissioned in November 1984, the mural was unveiled on January 20, 1986—the inaugural celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day and is prominently displayed in the library's Great Hall. It vividly portrays pivotal moments and figures from the civil rights era, serving as a lasting tribute to Dr. King's struggle and as a testament to all of the people, ideas, labor and collective effort it took to bring about change and justice.

To figure out who the main contributors and influencers are, the library has provided this activity to springboard teacher and student research: [King Mural Inquiry Activity](#).

The Civil Rights movement did more than just work against the segregation laws of the day. The Civil Rights Movement ensured rights for all people in big and small ways, the biggest of them being the following laws:

Civil Rights Act of 1964: This landmark law outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin

Voting Rights Act of 1965: Eliminated barriers to voting by addressing discriminatory practices in voting laws, including language barriers

Fair Housing Act of 1968: This act prohibited discrimination in housing

Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Hart-Celler Act) abolished the national origins quota system that heavily favored European immigrants and limited immigration from Asia, Africa, and Latin America

The Civil Rights Movement also inspired The Farm Workers Movement, The American Indian Movement (AIM); The Asian American Movement and movements for disability, gender and LGBTQ+ Rights.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Did You Know?

Did you know that the creation of **Central Park** in NYC was achieved through the destruction of an all Black sanctuary town called **Seneca Village**.

Seneca Village had the highest concentration of Black property owners in New York before the Civil War. There were three churches, a school, and several Black-owned businesses in addition to the homes. The residents were accused of being a nuisance and their lands were seized to become what we now know as Central Park. The commemorative plaque placed in 2001 and visitors' guides serves as acknowledgement of the lost village.

Many other Black property owners faced similar seizures/land loss and among the most famous are the burning of Tulsa, Oklahoma, the drowned towns beneath Lake Lanier in Georgia and Lake Martin in Alabama



"As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence." - bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress

Reading Shelf Spotlight



This anthology is inspired by the legendary sci-fi author Octavia Butler and features a collection of sixteen stories that explore sci-fi and fantasy and women and gender nonconforming protagonists. From Aliens to metal bending, this anthology has a little bit of everything for the inquiring mind that wonders...what if?

Why Teach Full History?

Celebrating and teaching the full history of the United States allows classroom and students to disrupt the myths and oversimplifications of the Black Experience in the United States. A report from the Southern Poverty Law Center revealed "what students are taught about slavery is fragmentary, without context, and worst of all, glossed over or sanitized." **So what is the danger of not knowing history or recognizing how and where one fits into the fabric of their nation?**

Edmund Burke is often misquoted as having said, *"Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it."* Spanish philosopher George Santayana is credited with the aphorism, *"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,"* while British statesman Winston Churchill wrote, *"Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it."*

These all point to the idea that ignorance is not bliss and choosing not to teach nuanced history does not safeguard us against the impact or ripple effects of historical events that continue to impact modern-day life. Teaching full history and having these conversations and engaging in research are essential to being deep thinkers and engaged citizens. A nuanced and thorough history is imperative to empowering students to do better and be better.

As Truman so succinctly put it: "The only thing new in the world is the history you do not know." If the tenet of education is knowledge, let us ensure that our students are knowledgeable of the triumphs, the contributions, the challenges, the struggles and the strivings that have helped create the dynamic nation we now inherit.

A people without the knowledge of their past, history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots

- Marcus Garvey

NP Black History Month Daily Inspiration

Find 30 [slides](#) that have been previously shared but bear resharing. These of inspirational and noteworthy Black Americans are meant to move us beyond heroes and holidays to the idea that these are everyday Black Americans living full lives. Each [slide](#) contains a read aloud for the elementary grades and a short biography for the upper grades. Use one or use all to spark thought, conversation, a quick do now or history break.